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Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /011 R

66625
DRAFTED BY:EUR:SOV:MGARRISON
APPROVED BY:S/S-O:P. JOHNSON
---------- 077675
R 170926Z MAY 75
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 115850

EXDIS

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM LONDON DATED MAY 15, 1975 SENT SEC-
STATE WASHDC IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 07388
EXDIS
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH GEORGI ARBATOV

REF: LONDON 7256

1. GEORGI ARBATOV PAID A CALL ON ME AT THE EMBASSY YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, AND WE TALKED FOR AN HOUR ABOUT VARIOUS ASPECTS OF US-USSR RELATIONS. HE SAID THAT THE AMERICAN DELEGATION HEADED BY GOVERNOR HARRIMAN HAD MADE A STRONGLY FAVORABLE IMPRESSION ON BREZHNEV AND THE OTHER SOVIET LEADERS. THEY THOUGHT THAT IT HAD BEEN VERY THOUGHTFULLY AND SENSITIVELY COMPOSED AND THAT ALL OF ITS MEMBERS, AND ESPECIALLY GOVERNOR HARRIMAN, HAD DONE GREAT CREDIT TO THE UNITED STATES. GOVERNOR HARRIMAN'S REMARKS (REFTEL) HAD BEEN RECEIVED UNDER-STANDINGLY AND WITH RESPECT.

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2. ARBATOV STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE BREZHNEV ATTACHES TO

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TWO OVERRIDING OBJECTIVES: PEACE AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE FOR THE SOVIET PEOPLE. HE IS COUNTING ON FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD DETENTE BEING MADE BEFORE HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FORD LATER THIS YEAR AND FOR THE PARTY CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY 1976. I SAID THAT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THE ONLY TRUE PROGRESS TOWARD DETENTE WAS REPRESENTED BY CONCRETE AND REALISTIC AGREEMENTS REFLECTING RECIPROCAL BENEFITS TO EACH SIDE IN SALT, MBFR, CSCE, MIDDLE EAST, ETC. ARBATOV AGREED WITH THIS AND SAID THAT THIS IS EXACTLY THE KIND OF PROGRESS BREZHNEV IS HOPING FOR. HE MADE A POINT OF THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET POLITICAL SYSTEM, ALTHOUGH UNLIKE OURS, NEVERTHELESS CONTAINS ROOM FOR DISAGREEMENT AND THAT NOT ALL HIGHLY-PLACED SOVIET LEADERS AGREE WITH BREZHNEV'S POLICIES, A FACT WHICH MAKES IT IMPORTANT FOR BREZHNEV TO DEMONSTRATE SUCCESS.

3. ACCORDING TO ARBATOV, BREZHNEV HAS DELIBERATELY AVOIDED ATTEMPTS TO EXPLOIT SETBACKS IN AMERICAN POLICY FOR SHORT-TERM SOVIET ADVANTAGE. HE CITED PORTUGAL AS AN EXAMPLE OF A SITUATION IN WHICH THE SOVIETS HAD SHOWN RESTRAINT. HE IS HIGHLY CONSCIOUS OF US CAPACITY TO REACT SWIFTLY TO THE PERCEPTION THAT ITS SECURITY IS THREATENED, AND HE BELIEVES THAT THE LONG RUN OBJECTIVES OF DETENTE ARE NOT WORTH JEOPARDIZING BY ACTIONS THAT MIGHT AROUSE SUCH CONCERNS. IN THIS CONNECTION, ARBATOV ASKED WHETHER I THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE A HARDENING OF AMERICAN ATTITUDES IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. WAS IT POSSIBLE, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT PRESIDENT FORD MIGHT SEEK TO USE THE NATO SUMMIT MEETING IN BRUSSELS TO DELAY ACTION ON CSCE? I SAID I HAD NO REAL KNOWLEDGE OF THIS BUT THOUGHT, ON THE WHOLE, THAT IT WAS UNLIKELY -- THE MEETING WOULD BE USED, RATHER, TO REAFFIRM THE STRENGTH OF US COMMITMENT TO ITS GENUINE AND ENDURING SECURITY INTERESTS IN EUROPE. I DID, HOWEVER, SAY THAT GIVEN DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA, PORTUGAL AND THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN, THE US COULD BE EXPECTED TO REACT STRONGLY TO ANY ATTEMPTS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SITUATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL TENSION. RICHARDSON UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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